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ABSTRACT

Many people are unaware of how principals invest their time on a day-to-day basis. This paper presents findings of a case study that examined the managerial behavior of a first-year elementary school principal. Data were derived from observation of the principal on two separate days. The findings show that the principal spent a significant amount of time (37 percent) managing by "walking about" on campus. She engaged in many face-to-face encounters with teachers, staff, students, and parents. She also spent a major portion of her time performing administrative tasks and was frequently interrupted. Ten percent of her time was spent in scheduled meetings. (Contains seven references.) (LMI)

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MANAGERIAL BEHAVIOR

OF A FIRST-YEAR PRINCIPAL

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Presented at the Annual Meeting of the
Mid-South Educational Research Association

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In this qualitative case study, direct (field-based) observation was used to examine the managerial behavior of a first-year elementary school principal. The study was conducted in the principal's natural setting, her school environment. Although many studies of principals have been conducted using indirect investigative methods, such as surveys that measure the characteristics of the person in the position, little field-based research focusing on the actual managerial behavior of principals has been done. Because of the lack of direct investigation addressing principals' managerial behavior, more field-based studies, such as the one reported herein, need to be undertaken.

What is it that principals do? Too many persons, including school board members and educational administration professors, have only a vague idea about what school principals actually do. They are unsure about how principals invest their time on a day-to-day basis. Principals, on the other hand, become discouraged of the unreasonable time demands made upon them by central office staff and others, such as parent-teacher organization officers. Central office administrators, teachers, secretaries, parents, and students often dominate the principal's time with requests, phone calls, conferences, drop-in visits, and meetings.

The few studies of principals' managerial behavior that have been conducted show the typical work day of a principal consists of a variety of administrative tasks which are frequently disrupted. Identified tasks include reading correspondence, writing reports, making phone calls, receiving phone calls,

participating in unscheduled meetings, attending scheduled meetings, and interacting with visitors who just drop-in. It is not uncommon for principals to engage in a different activity every two or three minutes. Face-to-face contacts with persons are numerous. Finding time to function as the school's instructional leader is often an impossible quest for many principals (Berman, 1982; Kmetz, 1982; Martin, 1980; Smith and Andrews. 1989; Whethayanugoon, 1995; Willis, 1980).

Research Methods

Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) refer to the type of investigation used in this study as *case study research*. The case (or subject) consisted of a first-year principal of an elementary school located in an urban setting. Research data were collected by observing the managerial behavior of the principal in her natural environment, the school. The study was conducted during the 1996 spring semester and involved over 18 hours of direct observation.

In conducting the investigation, the university researcher functioned as an observer-participant and frequently interacted with the principal observed. The principal served in the role of participant-observer and regularly interacted with the researcher.

To ensure accuracy, duration recording, frequency-count recording, and continuous recording methods were utilized. Observation focused on the events that were most relevant to the principal's administrative role. To mitigate against recording irrelevant data and observer omissions, the principal observed

actively participated in the process. In concert with the university researcher, she checked the field notes for accuracy, analyzed them, and assisted in crafting the finished product.

Observations were guided by a structured framework based on designs developed by Martin (1980), Kmetz (1982), and Wethayanugoon (1995). The frameworks these researchers developed were synthesized and simplified for the purpose of creating a modified framework that would yield relevant and easy-to-interpret information. The framework used in this study featured the following descriptive observational variables: (1) administrative work--principal in the school office working on routine administrative tasks such making announcements on the intercom, or in the principal's office doing desk-work tasks such as reading correspondence, writing letters, and making telephone calls; (2) *out and about* the campus--principal touring school grounds, visiting classrooms, monitoring halls, and inspecting restrooms; (3) scheduled meetings--principal involved in meetings with three or more persons that are planned in advance; (4) face-to-face interactions--principal directly interacting with persons, especially during tours of the campus; and (5) other--principal engaged in activities not covered in the first four categories.

Findings and Discussion

Field observations of the principal were conducted by the university researcher on February 13, 1996 and April 1, 1996. Field notes were analyzed, summarized, and edited. Presented as findings, the edited field notes follow.

February 13, 1996 Observation

7:20 a.m. Principal arrives at school. Checks tutoring program and talks with staff members involved.

7:23 a.m. Speaks briefly with custodian.

7:25 a.m. Enters office and engages in desk work. Leaves office door open. Checks planning calendar. Teaching assistant pops in to ask about contacting the PTA president in regard to a meeting scheduled that night (interruption). After the interruption, the principal goes back to reading her correspondence (memoranda from the central office, notes from teachers and parents, letters, etc.). Talks with the school secretary. Makes notes regarding items that need to be addressed during the day. Reviews duty post schedule. Checks notes stuck on a spindle to see if she needs to make a telephone call this morning that wasn't made yesterday. Files confidential and other sensitive correspondence in her "for my eyes only" secured file drawer.

7:45 a.m. Tells secretary that she is leaving the office to *walk about* the campus. Walks down the hall nearest the main entrance to the school. Greets teachers and students encountered in the hall. Checks restrooms and compliments custodian on their clean condition. Checks the media center to make sure it is staffed. Enters the cafeteria and talks with staff and students lining up for breakfast. Tours the grounds. Checks to see that teachers and staff are at duty posts. Walks into the building to see if the classroom environment of a teacher on a "needs to improve program" continues to show improvement. Checks bus unloading areas. Visits substitute teachers in their classrooms to let them know they should contact her if they have any problems. Enters other classrooms for the purpose of saying good morning. After touring the buildings and grounds, the principal returns to the school office to check that all teachers are present and the classrooms covered.

During her *walking about* tour, the principal has 44 brief interactions ((face-to-face encounters) with teachers, staff members, and students.

8:30 a.m. Meets with teacher in the principal's office to solve the problem of an irate parent. Door closed.

8:36 a.m. Child collapses in the hall with a seizure. Principal called to the scene (meeting with teacher interrupted). Takes charge. Tells secretary to contact the child's home. Child is comforted and taken to the office to wait for parent.

8:39 a.m. Meeting with teacher postponed until after school.

8:40 a.m. Bell rings to officially start school. Principal makes morning announcements over the intercom.

8:44 a.m. Talks briefly with office staff.

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8:46 a.m. Enters principal's office and checks mail. Office door open. Closes door after a few minutes to call parent who contacted the superintendent about the teacher who sent a blanket discipline letter home (see notation 5). After completing the telephone call, principal does desk work and files correspondence. Prepares for classroom drop-in visits by reviewing notes pertaining to previous visits.

9:10 a.m. Tells secretary that she is leaving the office to *walk about* the campus and visit classrooms. The first unannounced drop-in classroom visit made by the principal is to a teacher on "improvement" status. Stays nine minutes.

Makes second classroom visit. Observes learning environment and teacher's instructional methodology. Stays five minutes.

Makes third classroom visit. Observes learning environment and teacher's instructional methodology. Stays four minutes.

During her *walking about* tour, the principal has 10 brief interactions ((face-to-face encounters) with teachers, staff members, and students.

9:30 a.m. Returns to school office area to check messages and to tell secretary that she will be visiting the media center. Principal's plan to visit the media center is interrupted. Secretary informs her that a parent scheduled to meet with the principal and a teacher at 10:00 a.m. on a special education issue has arrived early.

9:35 a.m. Meeting between the principal, teacher and parent held in the principal's office. Door closed.

9:50 a.m. Tells secretary that she is leaving the office to once again walk *about* the campus and visit classrooms.

Visits the first classroom and stays four minutes.

Visits the second classroom and stays three minutes.

Visits the third classroom and stays four minutes.

Visits the fourth classroom and stays three minutes.

After visiting the fourth classroom, the principal leaves the building to observe the playground. Discusses a ground water problem with teachers and staff on recess duty. Tells them she will notify the district office of the problem.

Visits media center. Discusses program and schedule issues with the director. Stays five minutes.

Visits a fifth classroom to make a formal (summative) evaluation. Teacher was expecting the visit. Stays 30 minutes.

After the formal evaluation visit, the principal leaves the building to observe the playground. The fourth grade is at recess.

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Visits a sixth classroom and stays eight minutes.

Walks through the halls of the buildings checking restrooms after leaving the sixth classroom.

During her *walking about* tour, the principal has 32 brief interactions ((face-to-face encounters) with teachers, staff members, students, and parents.

11:30 a.m. Principal returns to school office. Checks messages. Enters principal's office. Door left open. Reads correspondence. Makes telephone call to central office. Receives telephone call from the superintendent.

11:55 a.m. Goes to luncheon meeting off campus.

12:45 p.m. Returns to school. Visits multipurpose room area and talks with parents setting up for the PTA meeting and learning fair to be held in the evening.

12:50 p.m. Returns to school office. Checks messages. Enters principal's office. Door left open. Works on student discipline records. Teacher drops in (interruption) to ask question. Goes back to working on student discipline records.

1:00 p.m. Tells secretary she is leaving the office to evaluate a teacher.

Visits a classroom to make a formal (summative) evaluation. Teacher was expecting the visit. Stays 30 minutes.

1:30 p.m. Returns to principal's office. Door closed. Reads mail.

Post-observation conference (summative evaluation) with teacher held in principal's office. Conference lasts 15 minutes.

Continues working on student discipline records after teacher leaves the office. Secretary contacts principal with a question (interruption).

2:00 p.m. Goes to multi-purpose room to confer with PTA officers. Officers are preparing for a meeting and learning fair to be held that evening. The purpose of the meeting with the PTA officers is to discuss a letter addressing 1996-97 class assignments that they had written the principal.

2:30 p.m. Returns to principal's office. Door closed. Holds post-observation conference (summative evaluation) with teacher in principal's office. Conference lasted 20 minutes.

The conference with the teacher is followed by conferences with students referred to the principal for disciplinary action. Principal holds brief individual conferences (approximately three minutes per student). Principal telephones one parent to say that her child will lose bus riding privileges for two days.

3:12 p.m. Makes afternoon announcements over the intercom.

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3:14 p.m. Tells secretary that she is leaving the office to again walk about the campus. First dismissal (kindergarten and grade 1) is at 3:15 p.m. and second dismissal is at 3:30 p.m. (grades 2-4) . *Walks about* the grounds in the vicinity of the car pickup and bus loading areas. Observes what is taking place. Checks to see that teachers and staff are at their duty posts. Talks with teachers, staff, students, and parents.

During her *walking about* tour, the principal has 29 brief interactions ((face-to-face encounters) with teachers, staff members, students, and parents.

3:45 p.m. Returns to school office. Checks with secretary regarding students not picked up. Two students are in the office waiting for their parents.

Enters principal's office. Door left open. Does paper work such as reports for the central office. Chats with teachers who drop in. Reads correspondence. Plans the agenda and prepares materials for the faculty meeting scheduled for the next morning.

From 3:45 p.m. until she went home, the principal has 12 encouters with teachers and staff.

5:00 p.m. Principal leaves the school to go home.

6:10 p.m. Principal returns to the school for a PTA meeting and learning fair.

8:00 p.m. Principal leaves the school (for second time) to go home.

Observer's notation 1: Principal's workday began at 6:00 a.m. because that is when teachers who are ill and need substitutes start calling her at home. The principal is responsible for securing substitutes.

Observer's notation 2: During her first *walking about* the campus tour, the principal's personal contacts (interactions) with teachers, staff, students, and parents were numerous due to people arriving for the start of school. Although the principal said a lot of "good mornings," she also addressed any problems or concerns brought to her attention.

Observer's notation 3: Hall adjacent to the school's main entrance was decorated with students' stories, art work, and accomplishments. Names of students making good scores in the school's *math whiz* game were also posted throughout the halls It was apparent that teaching and learning is recognized and celebrated at this school.

Observer's notation 4: Teacher and staff comments overheard by the observer during the walking about tours were *our principal is out and about again, she sure is eager to know what's going on, she doesn't believe in managing the school from her office, she is constantly about, she cares about what's happening in the classrooms, our principal walks her talk,* and *it's good to see the principal keeping tabs on things.*

Observer's notation 5: The problem solving conference with the teacher pertained to the teacher having sent home a mass produced note inferring that children's classroom behavior was a serious problem and asking for the

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parents' help in controlling their behavior. One parent who believed his child was not a behavior problem was offended by the tone of the note and contacted the superintendent of the school district. The principal did not know about the note until informed by her superintendent.

Observer's notation 6: No student behavior problems were noted for the time period before school officially started. Principal's presence out and about the campus appeared to convey the message that appropriate behavior was expected.

Observer's notation 7: Although the principal planned her work agenda, it was continually interrupted by persons requiring her immediate attention.

Observer's notation 8: Teachers appeared used to having the principal visit their classrooms. Teachers seemed comfortable and went about their work. Students also appeared comfortable about seeing the principal in their classrooms. Students were at task (learning) in all classrooms visited. No behavior problems were noted.

Observer's notation 9: Principal modeled the importance of teaching and learning by visiting classrooms when instruction was going on. Children working independently at interest centers talked with the principal about what they were learning or doing.

Observer's notation 10: The principal had little time to initiate written correspondence during the school day due to the demands placed on her time. All communication initiated by the principal was oral.

Observer's notation 11: In conferencing with teachers and students, the principal focused on the issue. She was task oriented.

Observer's notation 12: The principal usually drives home any students who miss their bus or if their parents can't pick them up.

April 1, 1996 Observation

7:25 a.m. Principal arrives at school. Goes to office area. Walks through the teacher's lounge. Talks to the repair man regarding a problem with the heating system. Chats with two teachers and the custodian.

7: 30 a.m. Enters office and engages in desk work. Leaves office door open. Checks planning calendar. Read correspondence. Looks at material given her regarding special education students. One of the school secretaries calls to say she will be late (interruption). Teacher walks into the office to present her retirement letter (interruption). Another secretary pops into the principal's office to discuss sign-in procedures (interruption).

7:45 a.m. Principal tells secretary that she is leaving the office to *walk about* the campus. Walks into the tutoring room and then down the hall nearest the main entrance to the school. Greets teachers and students encountered in the hall. Checks restrooms and enters the cafeteria. Talks with staff and students lining up for breakfast. Walks around the grounds. Checks to see that teachers and staff are at duty posts. Checks bus unloading areas. Makes sure that

students walk from the bus unloading area to the cafeteria for breakfast.

Makes first classroom drop-in visit. Observes the environment. Informs teacher about a child custody problem. Stays two minutes.

Makes second classroom visit (day-treatment room). Observes the environment. Talked about a student problem. Stays four minutes.

Makes third classroom visit (day-treatment room). Observes the environment. Checks out readiness of classroom and greets students as they enter. Stays two minutes.

Tours the grounds. Checks out a rest room window screen that was damaged through vandalism. Makes a note to have it fixed.

Makes fourth classroom drop-in visit. Observes the environment and the teacher's instructional methods. Stays two minutes.

Makes fifth classroom drop-in visit. Observes the environment and the teacher's instructional methods. Stays two minutes.

Makes sixth classroom drop-in visit. Observes the environment and the teacher's instructional methods. Stays four minutes.

Makes seventh classroom drop-in visit. Observes the environment and the teacher's instructional methods. The teacher was on a "needs to improve" program. Stays five minutes.

Makes eighth classroom drop-in visit. Observes the environment and the teacher's instructional methods. Stays three minutes.

After leaving the classroom, the principal checks the restrooms in the hall. In the hall, she notices that the mats near one of the school's entrances need cleaning and makes a note about it. Resumes tour of the grounds, notices some litter in the playground area and notes it. Informs the custodian about her concerns.

After completing the tour of the buildings and grounds, the principal returns to the school office.

During her *walking about* tour, the principal has 31 brief interactions (face-to-face encounters) with teachers, staff members, and students.

8:45 a.m. Principal returns to school office and makes morning announcements over the intercom. Chats briefly with office staff.

8: 50 a.m. Principal enters her office and checks mail. Office door closed. Returns call to the superintendent. Calls parent to discuss a behavior problem. Opens door. After completing the telephone call, principal does desk work and files correspondence. Teacher enters office to give the principal a document for the strategic planning committee (interruption). Another teacher drops in with special education materials (interruption). A third teacher drops in with a grant proposal (interruption). Principal returns to desk work but is interrupted by a telephone call about a staff develop

project. Principal prepares for classroom drop-in visits by reviewing notes pertaining to previous visits.

9:15 a.m. Principal tells secretary that she is leaving the office to *walk about* the campus and visit classrooms. Makes first unannounced drop-in visit classroom. Visit made to see how a substitute teacher is doing. Stays three minutes.

After checking the grounds, the principal makes her second classroom visit. Observes the environment and teacher's instructional methods. Stays four minutes.

Makes third classroom visit Observes the environment and teacher's instructional methods. Stays four minutes.

Makes fourth classroom drop-in visit. Observes the environment and the teacher's instructional methods. Stays three minutes.

Makes fifth classroom drop-in visit. Observes the environment and the teacher's instructional methods. Stays four minutes.

Makes sixth classroom drop-in visit. Observes the environment and the teacher's instructional methods. Stays four minutes.

Makes seventh classroom drop-in visit. Observes the environment and the teacher's instructional methods. The teacher was on a "needs to improve" program. Stays five minutes.

Makes eighth classroom drop-in visit. Observes the environment and the teacher's instructional methods. Stays three minutes.

Tours grounds after visiting the eighth classroom.

During her *walking about* tour, the principal has 22 brief interactions (face-to-face encounters) with teachers, staff members, and students.

9:54 a.m. Principal returns to school office. Chats briefly with office staff. Enters her office (door open). Does desk work. Teacher enters office to talk about landscaping project (interruption). After teacher leaves, principal calls PTA president to discuss the spring fair. Principal returns to desk work.

10:10 a.m. Scheduled meeting with parent, student, and two teachers regarding a behavior problem. Door closed.

10:30 a.m. After meeting concludes, principal tells secretary that she is leaving the office to *walk about* the campus and visit classrooms. The first unannounced classroom drop-in visit is made. Stays three minutes.

Makes second classroom visit. Observes the learning environment and teacher's instructional methods. Stays five minutes.

Makes third classroom visit Peruses students' creative projects. Leaves the teacher a "happy note" about the projects. Stays seven minutes.

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Makes fourth classroom drop-in visit. Observes children working in reading groups. Stays eight minutes.

Makes fifth classroom drop-in visit. Observes the learning environment and the teacher's instructional methods. Stays four minutes.

Makes sixth classroom drop-in visit. Observes the learning environment and the teacher's instructional methods. Stays four minutes.

Makes seventh classroom drop-in visit. Observes the learning environment and the teacher's instructional methods. Stays five minutes.

Principal checks cafeteria after visiting the seventh classroom. Tours grounds after checking cafeteria.

During her *walking about* tour, the principal has 27 brief interactions (face-to-face encounters) with teachers, staff members, and students.

11:45 a.m. Principal returns to school office and informs staff she is going to a luncheon meeting off campus.

12:30 p.m. Principal returns to campus and is reminded that she needs to attend a parent-teacher conference that is starting. Goes to teacher's classroom.

12:50 p.m. Returns to school office. Checks messages. Enters principal's office. Door left open. Does desk work. Reads correspondence. Talks with teacher about a grant project (interruption).

1:15 p.m. After meeting concludes, principal tells secretary that she is leaving the office to *walk about* the campus and visit classrooms. Makes first unannounced drop-in visit to a classroom visit. Leaves a "happy note." Stays five minutes.

Principal makes second classroom visit. Observes the learning environment and teacher's instructional methods. Leaves a "happy note." Stays four minutes.

Principal makes third classroom visit Peruses students' creative projects. Leaves the teacher a "happy note" about the projects. Stays six minutes.

Principal visits restrooms and notices that one is out of paper towels. Contacts the custodian to remedy the situation.

During her *walking about* tour, the principal has 12 brief interactions (face-to-face encounters) with teachers, staff members, and students.

1:45 p.m. Principal returns to school office. Checks messages. Enters principal's office. Door left open. Works on student discipline records. Parent drops in (interruption) to ask questions. Goes back to working on student discipline records. Teacher drops in

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(interruption) to ask a question. Finishes discipline records and studies a staff development survey.

Holds conferences with students referred to the principal for disciplinary action. Informs the students that she will be closely monitoring their behavior.

3:05 p.m. Enters school office and makes afternoon announcements over the intercom.

3:10 p.m. Principal tells secretary that she is leaving the office to *walk about* the campus. First dismissal (kindergarten and first grade) is at 3:15 p.m.; second dismissal is at 3:30 p.m. (grades 2-4). *Walks about* the grounds in the vicinity of the car pickup and bus loading areas. Observes what is taking place. Checks to see that teachers and staff are at their duty posts. Talks with teachers, staff, students, and parents.

During her *walking about* tour, the principal has 41 brief interactions (face-to-face encounters) with teachers, staff members, and students.

3:50 p.m. Principal returns to school office. Checks with secretary regarding students not picked up. All students picked up.

Enters principal's office. Door left open. Does paper work. Chats with teachers who drop in. From 3:50 p.m. until she went home, the principal interacted with 15 persons.

5:00 p.m. Principal leaves the school to go home.

Observer's notation 1: Principal said she didn't have to call any substitute teachers in the morning before school. All substitutes needed were planned in advance.

Observer's notation 2: During her five walking *about* the campus tours, the principal's brief interactions (face-to-face encounters) with teachers, staff, students, and parents numbered 133. She greeted and talked briefly with numerous people and addressed any problems or concerns brought to her attention. Principal's behavior appeared to indicate that she is a person-oriented administrator.

Observer's notation 3: The hall adjacent to the school's main entrance was decorated with students' stories, art work, and accomplishments.

Observer's notation 4: Very few students were observed to be off-task (not learning) during the principal's drop-in visits to classrooms.

Observer's notation 5: The principal regularly walked about the buildings and grounds. During the tours she made brief notes about what she observed. Problems encountered (e.g., restroom out of paper towels) were addressed and resolved. Principal expressed the belief that she needed to be *out and about* to properly manage the school.

Observer's notation 6: No student behavior problems were noted for the time period before school officially started. Principal's presence *out and about* the campus appeared to convey the message that appropriate behavior was expected.

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Observer's notation 7: In the conferences and meetings she attended, the principal took the role of facilitator. She wanted the persons involved in the meetings--teachers, parents, students--to develop their own solutions and come to agreement on a preferred solution.

Observer's notation 8: The principal's desk work was continually interrupted by teachers, staff, parents, and students asking questions or presenting problems demanding her immediate attention.

Observer's notation 9: The principal's major purpose during drop-in visits was to see if classroom environments were safe, orderly, and attractive. Teachers appeared used to having the principal visit their classrooms. They seemed comfortable. Went about their work. Students also appeared comfortable about seeing the principal in their classrooms. The principal's presence in classrooms communicated the message that *she cares about teaching and learning*. "Happy notes" were given to many of the teachers she visited.

Observer's notation 10: At the end of the day the principal stated, "It was a particularly smooth day. Things ran well."

Discussion of the Findings

For the purpose of discussion, the findings noted during two days of observation (February 13 and April 1) are combined. Over 20 hours (1,223 minutes) of observation were recorded.

During the period recorded, the principal spent 44 percent of her time (538 minutes) doing administrative tasks, such as doing tasks in the school office, participating in conferences, or doing paperwork in the principal's office. Tasks included making announcements over the intercom, reading correspondence, writing letters, making telephone calls, and talking with teachers and others who dropped in for a variety of reasons. While engaged in office work, the principal was interrupted numerous times. (See notes in section pertaining to findings.) The amount of time spent on administrative tasks and the high frequency of interruptions parallels the findings of other researchers. Principals are frequently interrupted in their work (Berman, 1982; Kmetz, 1982;

Martin, 1980; Smith and Andrews. 1989; Whethayanugoon, 1995; Willis, 1980).

Walking about the campus, for example, touring the school grounds, visiting classrooms, and inspecting restrooms, constituted 37 percent of the principal's time (538 minutes). Other studies did not give prominence to this category. Because the principal's interest in being a visible presence in her school was mentioned by her prior to conducting the study, managing by being *out and about* the campus was given prominence as a category and made part of the observational framework. As the findings indicate, the principal spent a significant portion of her on-the-job time *managing by walking about*. This strategy may be crucial to establishing and maintaining a safe, orderly school environment. It may also be important for gaining the respect of teachers, staff, students, and parents. (See notes in section pertaining to findings.)

Scheduled meetings consumed 10 percent of the principal's time (120 minutes). For purposes of studying the principal's managerial behavior, scheduled meetings were defined as meetings involving three or more persons that are planned in advance and are not considered conferences, such as parent-teacher conferences or teacher evaluation conferences. The time spent on scheduled meetings was similar to what other researchers reported (Berman, 1982; Kmetz, 1982; Martin, 1980; Smith and Andrews. 1989; Whethayanugoon, 1995; Willis, 1980).

A total of 249 face-to-face interactions were recorded (i.e., the principal directly interacting with persons) during *managing by walking about* tours. When encounters with persons that occurred in the office area during conferences, or at meetings elsewhere in the school (e.g., principal had over 100 face-to-face interactions at the PTA meeting and learning fair) are included in the count, the number of face-to-face interactions becomes significantly higher. This study supports the findings of other researchers who report that the job of being a principal requires many interactions with persons (Berman, 1982; Kmetz, 1982; Martin, 1980; Smith and Andrews. 1989; Whethayanugoon, 1995; Willis, 1980).

Other activities the principal engaged in that were not covered in the first four categories included such behaviors as leaving the campus to go to luncheon meetings. The principal spent nine percent of her time (107 minutes) in other activities.

In summary, the principal observed in this study spent a significant percentage of her time *out and about* the campus. She had many face-to-face personal interactions with teachers, staff, students, and parents. She also spent a major portion of her time on administrative tasks and was frequently interrupted when doing office work.

It should be noted in concluding this paper that the findings are limited to two days in the work year of a first-year principal. This time period may not accurately reflect the school year in general. Also, the principal's interest in managing by being *out and about* the campus may have influence the amount of

time given to this activity. Nevertheless, studies such as the one reported are important if an accurate picture of what principals actually do, or should do, is ever to be developed.

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In this qualitative case study, direct (field-based) observation was used to examine the managerial behavior of a first-year elementary school principal. The study was conducted in the principal's natural setting, her school environment. Although many studies of principals have been conducted using indirect investigative methods, such as surveys that measure the characteristics of the person in the position, little field-based research focusing on the actual managerial behavior of principals has been done. Because of the lack of direct investigation addressing principals' managerial behavior, more field-based studies, such as the one reported herein, need to be undertaken.

What is it that principals do? Too many persons, including school board members and educational administration professors, have only a vague idea about what school principals actually do. They are unsure about how principals invest their time on a day-to-day basis. Principals, on the other hand, become discouraged of the unreasonable time demands made upon them by central office staff and others, such as parent-teacher organization officers. Central office administrators, teachers, secretaries, parents, and students often dominate the principal's time with requests, phone calls, conferences, drop-in visits, and meetings.

The few studies of principals' managerial behavior that have been conducted show the typical work day of a principal consists of a variety of administrative tasks which are frequently disrupted. Identified tasks include reading correspondence, writing reports, making phone calls, receiving phone calls,